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Volume 11

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Number 12

DECEMBER MEETING: The next regular meeting of the Association will be held Thursday evening, the 12th, at 8 o'clock, in the Board Room of the Harbor Commissioners, Room 19, Second Floor, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Mr. Charles A. Bryant, subject: "Some Birds of Tide-land and Desert."

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DECEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, December 15th, to the University Campus, Berkeley. San Francisco members take 8:40 A. M. Key Route boat and Berkeley train, ride to end of line University and Shattuck Avenues, where party will form at 9:20 A. M. East Bay members may reach this point by College, Telegraph, Shattuck or Grove Street cars. Bring luncheon and canteens. Mr. F. M. Jencks, Leader.

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1930 DUES: The annual dues for the coming year of 1930 are payable January 1st, and all members are requested to make their remittances as early as possible to the Treasurer.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING: The 154th regular meeting of the Audubon Association of the Pacific was held Thursday evening, the 14th, at 8 o'clock in the Board Room of the Harbor Commissioners, Ferry Building, San Francisco, with fifty-five members and guests present. Mr. C. A. Harwell, President, presiding.

The question of continuing *The Gull* as a monthly or quarterly publication was again brought before the Association by the President. Mr. Carl R. Smith spoke well of the Association's work, and put forth reasons favoring the continuance of *The Gull* in its present form.

Field observations were reported as follows: Mr. Joseph Mailliard:—On Spreckels Lake, Golden Gate Park, Albino ruddy duck, this making the third successive year for the appearance of this bird. An interesting feature of this Albino ruddy is that upon each successive visit it is displaying more coloration. Also 149 canvas-back ducks, the largest flock ever observed by Mr. Mailliard on this lake. Mr. Mailliard also stated that in his years of collecting specimens in Marin County, he had never recorded Gambel sparrows in the western part thereof; however, this Fall he observed these birds at Woodacre and to date has banded a total of nine. Scarcity of Nuttall sparrows in Golden Gate Park was likewise noted by Mr. Mailliard.

Mrs. Stephens reported Say Phoebe at Cliff House, October 6th.

Mr. Lockerbie reported duck hawk at Mussel Rock; red phalaropes and Say Phoebe at Salada Beach, October 17th; three immature Heermann and two ring-billed gulls and a kingbird at Lake Merced, November 10th.

Mr. Bryant, in six hours' birding November 10th, at Point Reyes observed eighty-one birds, including all five grebes in one lagoon of Tomales Bay.

Dr. George Ruhle delivered a very interesting talk on Glacier National Park, telling much of the geographical features of this region and its fauna and flora, all of which he illustrated with slides.



COMMENTS

The following is in part a letter received by the Editor from our esteemed fellow-member Herman de Fremery:

The Book of Etiquette versus Common Sense

"I rise to object strenuously to the continued use of lower-case instead of capitals for the first letters of the names of bird species. I understand that the lower-case beginnings are used in *THE GULL* because of the 'say-so' of some book of style or other which insists that caps be used only for proper names.

Be that as it may, common sense insists that caps be used for human convenience.

To facilitate attention, for quick apprehension, for easy retention, the capitalization of the first letters of the names of bird species is a great help to the reader. It causes the bird's name, the central subject in a bird magazine or bird book, to stand out immediately and clearly from the welter of common words. It is easier to notice it, easier to read it, easier to remember it.

These are doubtless the reasons why this sensible custom has been adopted by the three greatest bird magazines in the country; the *Condor*; *Bird-Lore* and the *Auk*.

The editors of authoritative bird books are no less impressively arrayed on the side of the common sense use of capitals to facilitate the reading of birds' names, as for instance, in these outstanding works:

Birds of the World by Knowlton and Rideway;
 Birds of America by T. Gilbert Pearson;
 Birds of Eastern North America by Chapman;
 Birds of New York by Eaton;
 Birds of Massachusetts by Forbush;
 Birds of Western Canada by Traverneer;
 Birds of California by Dawson;
 Game Birds of California by Grinnel, Storer and Bryant;
 Birds of the Pacific Coast by Hoffman;
 Birds of the Ocean by Alexander.

I take my seat, dear Editor of *THE GULL*, in the blissful assurance that some day the Book of Style will be slipped into the waste basket and common sense into the typography of our *GULL*,—but since eventually, why not now?"

RED-BELLIED HAWKS: The Red-bellied Hawk is rarely enough seen in Marin County to be worth noting. Four of these birds were seen on October 6th, 1929, over the marshy meadows near Olema. The first one seen, from the rear, was perched on a low scrubby tree out in the open, and was being dashingly attacked by a White-tailed Kite. At every swoop of the Kite, the Hawk would spread its wings and tail, doubtless to maintain its balance, thus finely displaying their pattern of black and white. At length it flapped heavily away, disappeared over a low hill, then rose skyward with three others. Soaring upward in stately interlacing circles, their bright rufous underparts flashing against a clear blue sky, the white "window" near the wing tips amazingly clear-cut, their high and piercing screams coming wildly down, they, at last, reached their migration height and then sailed eastward.

HERMAN DE FREMERY.

(Names of bird species in the above article capitalized at the request of the author.—Editor.)

BIRDS OF THE CARMEL REGION

By LAIDLAW WILLIAMS

On the water of the little protected coves along the shore of Pacific Grove or Pebble Beach, the observer often sees in winter what first appears to be a little chunk of wood. "No, it's a bird!" he thinks, when the object seems to move; "but it can't be, it's just another bit of flotsam of a kind which often fools bird-lovers at the seashore." All of a sudden the "chunk of wood" opens wings, dips forward and dives. Thus, the bird-watcher is often puzzled until he becomes acquainted with the Rhinoceros Auklet.

The California Murre, the Ancient Murrelet and the Marbled Murrelet also occur in the Carmel Region in winter. The Pigeon Guillemot stays the year round and nests in niches on the rocky cliffs of Point Lobos. During the breeding season a pair will often face each other while resting on the water and open brilliant red-lined mouths and emit high-pitched buzzing whistles.

The loudest voiced bird at Point Lobos is the Black Oyster-catcher. Its ringing monosyllabic cries are wild and almost maniacal in character as it alights on dark surf-washed rocks. Here its sooty brown plumage blends in with the rich, deep colors of the sea-weeds and renders it almost invisible except for its pinkish feet and long vermilion bill. For awhile it walks about quietly, prying forth limpets which adhere to parts of the rock; but when alarmed it again starts to cry, slowly at first, then faster until at the moment of taking flight, the sound breaks into weird, rolling, hysterical laughter: as wild and strange as the massive cliffs and weather-beaten cypresses of the famous Point Lobos setting.

Up the Carmel Valley, either near the old Mission or farther up, one can see again the White-tailed Kite. This unferocious, white and gray little raptor, with black shoulder patches, was once extirpated from the region. But it has come back again and in 1928 a nest was discovered with two young at Los Ranchetos, a sub-division some seven miles up the valley. This spring (1929) a pair was often seen near the Mission but their nest was not definitely located.

The actions of the adults are always interesting to watch as they hunt low,—but not as low as the marsh hawk—over the river-bottom lands. At intervals they hover in mid-air, sparrow hawk fashion. It is from this position that one bird, presumably the male, does an attractive little courtship act. It stops hovering and with yellow talons dangling and wings held motionless in a "V" above the back, gradually slips through the air with a somewhat unsteady but, at the same time, not ungraceful, wavering motion. Soon it lightly touches ground or before reaching earth, rises again to hover once more.

On the roadside between Carmel and Point Lobos yellow-billed magpies are sometimes seen. Up San Jose Canyon to the east one hears the delightfully clear cascading song of the Canyon Wren coming, not from the rocks of the creek or canyon walls as would be expected, but from within the dark interior of an old disused barn.

Pygmy Nuthatches twitter constantly in the pines above the streets of Carmel. On the hilltop near the road to Monterey, one or more Hermit Thrushes (presumably of the race called Monterey Hermit Thrush and summer residents of the region) have been found singing from within the deep pine woods during the latter part of May.

(For other birds of the Carmel Region, see articles in THE GULL of August 1920 and January 1921.—Editor.)



NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, the 17th, starting from Ross, Marin County, and following the same route taken on the June field trip of this year.

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The day was clear, calm and warm, an ideal Indian Summer day. As is usual on this trip, the birds were plentiful and allowed close approach.

On leaving the train at Ross, three species were present, two winter visitants, Audubon warblers and Ruby-crowned kinglets and one resident, song sparrows. Private grounds, near the school, consisting of lawns and gardens shaded by oaks, furnished a list of eleven birds.

Of the three lakes visited, Phoenix Lake, the most exposed, with many hikers, a few automobiles and horse-back riders passing close to its edge, furnished coots, four species of ducks and pipits feeding along its shores. A Pigeon Hawk was also present, apparently attracted by the Pipits as he made frequent swoops in their direction, but during our observation, always returned to the same perch unsuccessful.

Birds observed were: On San Francisco Bay:—Western grebe; California brown pelican; Farallon double-crested cormorant; glaucous-winged, northern western, California and Bonaparte gulls.

On Richardson's Bay and adjacent marshes:—American eared and western grebes; California great blue and black-crowned night herons; pintail and ruddy ducks; California clapper rail; American coot; northern killdeer; western sandpipers; northern western and California gulls; western belted kingfisher; western American crow; western meadowlark; California Brewer blackbird.

Phoenix Lake:—Canvas-back, lesser scaup, ring-necked and ruddy ducks; American coot. Alpine Lake:—Wilson snipe.

Elsewhere:—Northern turkey vulture; sharp-shinned, western pigeon and desert sparrow hawks; coast California quail; northern band-tailed pigeon; California coast screech owl; Anna hummingbird; Monterey red-shafted flicker; California acorn-storing, willow downy and Nuttall ladder-backed woodpeckers; Rocky Mountain Say and black phoebes; southern coast Steller and northwestern California jays; western American crow; Marin chestnut-backed chickadee; California plain titmouse; Pacific coast bush-tit; tawny brown creeper; ruddy wren-tit; Vigors Bewick wren; western robin; coast varied and dwarf hermit thrushes; western Mexican bluebird; western golden and ruby-crowned kinglets; American pipit; California Hutton vireo; Pacific Audubon warbler; California linnet; San Francisco spotted and brown towhees; western savannah, western lark and Fox sparrows; junco; golden-crowned, Nuttall white-crowned and Marin song sparrows. Sixty-five species.

Members in attendance were: Mr. and Mrs. Lockerbie, Mr. and Mrs. Stephens; Mrs. Cummings, Pitman; Misses Berg, Cohen, Kautz, Paroni, Pettit, Pringle, Rinehart; Dr. Card; Messrs. Bremer, Bryant, Jencks, Myer. Guests: Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and daughter; Mrs. Adams; Misses Adams, Bastin, Belvel, Kirsch, Pennell, Weick and six high school girls, guests of Miss Pettit. Messrs. Brown, Hafner, Reed, Smith. Eighteen members and twenty guests.

C. A. BRYANT, *Leader and Historian.*

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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Meets second Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m., in the Board Room of the State Board of Harbor Commissioners, Ferry Building, Second Floor, Room 19.

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Additional active members in the same household and under the same support, \$2.00 per year. Life membership, \$50.00.

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.